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THE ELIZABETHAN PLAYHOUSE AND OTHER STUDIES, by W. J. Lawrence. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia; Shakespeare Head Press, Stratford-upon-Avon. 1912. (8 vo, pp. xvi + 265, illus.)

Mr. Lawrence claims to have been "the pioneer" in the modern scientific study of "the physical conditions and stage conventionalisms of the Elizabethan playhouse." After readily granting this modest claim, we may add that he is at the present time one of the most expert investigators in this field, and that a volume from him presenting his mature opinions on a subject so important to the study of the Tudor-Stuart drama is heartily welcome.

In this volume, he has assembled ten papers which during the past decade he had published in various periodicals—the *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, *Englische Studien*, *Anglia*, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, etc. Yet he has taken care to revise, to amplify, and even in places to rewrite these papers, in order to keep them abreast with the notable progress recently made in this subject; and in addition, he has enriched the volume by the insertion of thirteen full-page illustrations, which, he states, "have been chosen as much for their rarity as their appositeness."

The first paper, entitled "The Evolution and Influence of the Elizabethan Playhouse," is, on the whole, the best general discussion of the subject that we have. The author accepts with too much faith, perhaps, the conjectures of Professor Wallace (*The Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars*); and virtually all his conclusions about the influence of the Blackfriars theatre on the evolution of the playhouse must be modified in view of the recent discoveries regarding the history of that building. For this, of course, Mr. Lawrence is in no way to blame. Luckily, before his book was off the press he was able to read in *The Daily Chronicle* Monsieur Feuillerat's brief announcement of those discoveries, and to add a supplementary paper, "New Facts About the Blackfriars," in which he corrects his earlier statements and rewrites the history of the private playhouses; and this supplementary paper is one of the most valuable in the book. Other papers elaborate special topics connected with the playhouse—"The Situation of the Lords' Room," "Title and Locality Boards," "Music and Song in the Elizabethan Theatre"; still other papers take up separate themes—"The Mounting of Carolan Masques," "Early French Players in England," "Did Thomas Shadwell Write an Opera on *The*

Tempest?” and “Who Wrote the Famous *Macbeth* Music?” In this review, however, I shall confine myself to those papers dealing particularly with the Elizabethan playhouse.

On not a few matters of detail one may feel inclined to disagree with Mr. Lawrence. This, however, is somewhat hazardous, for the author does not always substantiate his assertions with a citation of evidence, so that it is hard to know when he is merely speculating, and when he could, if pressed to do so, advance the necessary proof. Nevertheless I shall call attention to some of his statements which seem to me to be questionable.

P. 6. Of the rear stage he says: “Its employment was, to some extent, restricted by the remoteness and obscurity of its position, an inconvenience which almost invariably demanded the bringing in of lights at the commencement of all inner scenes.” Mr. Lawrence has failed to observe that in the scenes to which he refers for proof of this statement, the torches, candles, or lanterns were brought in for the purpose not of illuminating the rear stage, but of indicating to the audience that the action took place at night. In the open playhouse, with the afternoon sun beating down on the platform, the rear stage would not be dark; and there is abundant evidence that at times much action took place in this restricted area.

P. 8. The well-known “shadow” which protected a part of the stage from the weather is thus described: “A thatched (or possibly, tiled and leaded) half-roof, sloping down from the tiring-house, and known indifferently as ‘the shadow,’ or ‘the heavens’.” Was not this half-roof called “the shadow,” “the shade,” or “the cover” (see the Fortune contract), and was not the term “the heavens” applied rather to a hut which overhung a part of the lower stage, and through the floor of which gods and goddesses were lowered? Note Heywood’s *Silver Age* II. i: “Juno and Iris descend from the heavens”; *The Valiant Welshman* I. i: “Fortune descends downe from heaven to the stage.” The Hope contract is too vague to prove anything in this connection, but the “heavens” there referred to may well be a hut projecting over the stage. The following reference to the Fortune bears on this point: “There shall also great inflammations of Lightning happen this year about the Fortune, in Golding Lane, if the players can get leave to act the tragedie of Doctor Faustus, in which tempest shall be seen shag-haired divils run roaring with squibs in their mouths, while drums make thunder in the tiring house, and the 12 *d.* hirelings make artificial light

in her heavens."—*Crete Wonders Foretold*. The "shadow," it would seem, sloped from the "heavens" rather than from the tiring-house.

P. 9. Of the "turret" over the stage (which I would identify with the "heavens") Mr. Lawrence says: "Through its apertures stage ordnance were let off, a custom that led to the destructive fire at Shakespeare's Globe." The destructive fire here referred to is not in itself sufficient to prove this statement. In the various accounts of that catastrophe no indication is made of the location of the cannon; but distinct reference is made to a strong wind that was blowing, which might account for the landing of the "stoppage" in the thatched roof. I can recall no stage-direction that reads: "Ordnance shot off above," whereas the direction "Ordnance within" is not uncommon.

P. 9. "Not all, if any, of the rooms and galleries were provided with seats, although in most parts stools and cushions could be procured by paying extra." Surely there are abundant references to seats and benches in the galleries of the "penny-bench theatres." See the Fortune contract.

P. 11. "An extra charge [for admission to the galleries] was subsequently enforced, according to the locality, the fee being collected during the performance by 'gatherers'." The last clause appears doubtful. Would it not be simpler, and easier (not to say surer), to collect the extra fee at the time of entrance to the gallery? Some proof of Mr. Lawrence's statement is needed.

P. 13. "For the benefit of those who, through coming early, arrived dinnerless, eatables, and drinkables, including fruits, nuts and bottled beer, were vended in the theatre." Undue emphasis is put on those who arrived dinnerless. Such persons must have been comparatively few in number, and the "eatables and drinkables" were primarily intended for those

Fellows that at ordinaries dare eat
Their 18 *d.* thrice out before they rise
And yet go hungry to a play.¹

P. 14. "There was seldom any absolute certainty in the Bankside houses as to what would be performed." (Cf. also p. 50.) Some modification of this assertion is surely needed, or some conclusive proof. It is hardly in keeping with what we know of the dignity of the actors, or with their custom of posting bills throughout the city:

Then hence, lewd nags, away
Go read each post, view what is played to-day.

¹ *The Scornful Lady* IV. 2.

Note also the following custom referred to by Humphrey Moseley in his poem "The Stationer," prefixed to the First Folio of Beaumont and Fletcher:

As after th' *Epilogue* there comes some one
To tell the *Spectators* what shall next be shown.

The fact that a play was occasionally changed at the demand of an unruly audience led Mr. Lawrence, I suspect, into making too sweeping an assertion.

The statement that the Theatre and the Curtain were used not only for plays but also for bull and bear baiting, and that their stages, as a result, were removable, is open to grave doubt. Upon this assumption rests the theory that the oblique disposition of the stage doors was a contribution to the stage arrangement from the private playhouse of Blackfriars. The hypothesis is plausible, yet fails to take into consideration the fact that in the public playhouses the stage was constructed of wood, and hence could be easily modified. It is hard to say when the oblique doors came into use; and, moreover, the first Blackfriars seems merely to have continued the court usage of multiple setting.

The second paper deals with "The Situation of the Lords' Room." The theory that these rooms were over the stage held sway, I believe, before Mr. Lawrence wrote. The most original part of his essay is the suggestion that at some time before 1609 these rooms were degraded into a shameful resort for courtesans: "Dark and ill-placed, they could no longer have been let to spectators, but the cupidity of the players induced them to turn the deserted rooms into a licentious rendezvous for the lower middle classes . . . A mart for illicit love and bought kisses." This astonishing theory, not in keeping with what we know of the better actors of the time—for example, Shakespeare, Heminge, or Heywood,—is based solely on the well-known passage in Dekker's *The Gull's Hornbooke*: "I meane not into the Lords roome (which is now but the Stages Suburbs): No, those boxes, by the iniquity of custome, conspiracy of waiting women and Gentlemen-Ushers, that there sweat together, and the covetousnes of Sharers, are contemptibly thrust into the reare, and much new Satten is there dambd, by being smothred to death in darknesse." Accordingly, the gull is advised not to go near the Lords' Room.

Now, every student of Elizabethan literature knows that the term "suburbs" was often applied to that section of London which contained the houses of ill-fame. But this usage of the word was secondary, and it is not to be supposed that in the

passage quoted Dekker necessarily meant to imply that the Lords' Rooms were "suburbs" in that odious sense. The rest of the passage fails to carry out such an idea. Exactly what is meant, to be sure, is not clear; but we may infer that the Lords' Rooms at the time Dekker wrote had ceased to be highly fashionable, and had been turned over to the servants of fashionable people ("waiting women and Gentlemen Ushers"), the natural successors. Furthermore, we may infer that the rooms were much over crowded, and that because of their location they gave poor opportunities for the gallant to display his gorgeous apparel. Dekker, in his satirical vein, would hardly have been so earnest in urging the gull not to enter the Lords' Room, if it enjoyed the reputation that Mr. Lawrence wants to give it.

Mr. Lawrence takes Professor Schelling to task for stumbling in his interpretation of the phrase "advance yourself up to the Throne of the Stage," and shows that Dekker refers to the stage as a whole (the throne of the playhouse), not to an actual property throne on the stage. It may be proper, therefore, to point out that Mr. Lawrence himself stumbles in this passage. He says, by way of interpretation: "He [the gull] has come in by the tiring-house door, having duly paid the preliminary price of admission; more remains to be disbursed for a stool. The same doorway leads to the Lords' room." Now, to my mind, the passage shows clearly that the gull entered by the regular door of admission, paid his penny to the gatherer who stood there with the "box," and then "advanced" through the playhouse "*up to*" the stage. Observe the passage itself: "Whether therefore the gatherers of the publique or private Playhouse stand to receive the after-noonnes rent, let our gallant, (having paid it) presently advance himself *up to* the Throne of the Stage." It is not likely that regular gatherers stood at the tiring-house entrance to accommodate the few who entered there. Besides, having entered the tiring-room, the gallant would be on the stage at once, and could not well "advance himself up to the throne of the stage."

On pages 95-6, Mr. Lawrence says of the tiring-room: "Its identity with the 'upper stage' seems well assured." And he proceeds to give what he is pleased to call "proof of the position of the tiring-room." The proof, however, shows nothing of the kind, for there is no reason why the hangings through which the half-dressed players peeped "to see how the house did fill" were not on the lower stage. Nor is this theory in full harmony with the statement (p. 7): "At many of the

theatres, when not in dramatic use, the upper stage was occupied by the musicians and boy-singers."

On many other points of minor importance one might feel inclined to question the statements of Mr. Lawrence. But the physical conditions of the early playhouses have not yet been exactly determined by careful research, and many details still remain in obscurity. Mr. Lawrence's book is valuable as a summing-up, and in the case of doubtful points, as an inspiration to further investigation.

It would be pleasant, in conclusion, to dwell on the many commendable features of the volume. I have space, however, to mention only two.

In the paper, "New Facts about the Blackfriars," is presented an ingenious and plausible explanation of the term "private" as applied to certain playhouses. The author connects the word with the city ordinance of 1575, forbidding public performances within the city; "Provydid allwaie that this Acte . . . shall not extend to anie plaies . . . in the pryvate hous, dwellinge, or lodginge, of anie nobleman, citizen or gentleman . . . without publique or common collection of money of the auditorie." This seems conclusive.

In the paper on "Title and Locality Boards," and again in the final essay, Mr. Lawrence has done a valuable service by emphasizing the use of the multiple setting which long held sway at the court, and, at first, in the private, and to a less extent, in the public playhouses. The need of calling special attention to this fact is well proved by the clumsy attempts of modern editors to give exact locations to the scenes in our early plays. The disastrous results of such an attempt are to be observed in Mr. Bond's recent edition of the plays of John Lyly. As Mr. Lawrence remarks (p. 237): "It is advisable that the student of Elizabethan drama should make himself thoroughly conversant with the distinguishing characteristics of the multiple scene and the conventionalisms its employment gave rise to, so that he may readily recognize a play constructed strictly on its principles, when he comes across it."

JOSEPH QUINCY ADAMS, JR.

Cornell University.

DIE KAILYARD SCHOOL: EIN BEITRAG ZUR NEUEREN ENGLISCHEN LITERATURGESCHICHTE, von Dr. Fritz Loose. Berlin, Emil Eberling. 1912. Pp. 93.

The material which Dr. Loose has here brought forward in a formal thesis would have served much better for a magazine article, to the length of which it might be reduced by the